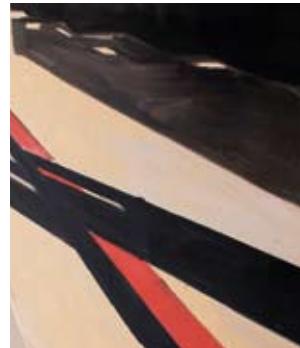


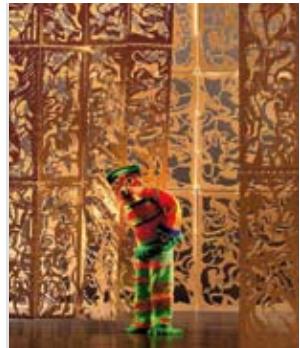
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#117

Countdown to the Great War



© Leonardo D'Avanzo

Eighteen dead in Buizingen train crash

Head-on collision is the most serious rail accident in Belgium since 1908

ALAN HOPE

At least 18 people were reported dead after two trains collided head-on on Monday, 15 February, by Buizingen, near Halle. At least another 55 people were seriously hurt and many more sustained minor injuries. At the time of going to press, rescue workers were still working on the wreckage, with the death toll expected to climb.

"One train was travelling from Leuven to 's Gravenvoeren, the other from Quiévrain to Liège," said Kristien Berckmans, spokesperson for Infrabel, which is in charge of rail infrastructure. According to Infrabel, there were "a number of injured". The

mayor of Halle, Dirk Pieters, reported 20 dead, even as the injured were still being taken from the scene.

"The first carriages were completely wrecked," one witness said. "There's not much of them left. Another man described how he had been trapped for 10 minutes until he was freed by emergency services, which arrived quickly on the scene. "I was really lucky; others in the carriage were a lot worse off," he said.

► *continued on page 3*

While the Flemish Region is busy with improvements to memorials in the lead-up to the centenary of the First World War, we visit Poperinge, home to two of the most evocative sites

► *see story on page 5*



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Derek Blyth

News in brief

LETTERS

Police in Brussels seized 15 firearms, including a Kalashnikov type machine gun, in raids on 22 addresses associated with the Albanian underworld. Officers also seized ammunition, bullet-proof vests, police clothing and more than eight kilograms of explosives. The Kalashnikov is similar to the weapon used in a holdup in Brussels three weeks ago in which a police officer was shot. Firearms were used in more than 6,000 incidents in the city last year.

Students of the Sint-Lodewijk technical secondary school in Genk have been **forbidden from using mobile phones** within the school premises. According to school director Michel Janssen, mobile phones are not only disruptive but can be used to photograph or film teachers, leading to possible judicial consequences. One teacher in another school was suspended last week for six months after an assault on a pupil, filmed with a mobile phone and posted on YouTube. Another teacher was filmed hitting a student following a snowball incident. "It can't be right that teachers have to worry more about legal claims than they do about their teaching," Janssen said.

A plastic surgeon at Ghent University Hospital has succeeded in **reattaching the nose** of a woman in her 60s, which was bitten off by her own dog. The operation is only the second successful reattachment of its type in history. Not only is the nose uncommonly complex, but, in dog-bite cases, the tissue is usually irretrievably damaged. The Ghent woman's husband found the detached portion of his wife's nose and packed it in ice to bring it to the hospital. "The patient is doing well. She is breathing normally through her nose and even has her sense of smell back," said surgeon Filip Stillaert.

Flanders is rediscovering its taste for travel this Crocus Vacation, with an increase in the number of city trips booked, according to tour operator Jetair. The top five destinations: London, Paris, Rome, Prague and Cologne. "Last year, a lot of people cancelled trips because of the crisis," commented Hans Vanhaelemesch of Jetair. "This year, they seem to be making up for lost time." Meanwhile, 30,000 passengers were expected to pass through Brussels airport last Friday, the beginning of the school holiday.

I am contacting you following your conversation with my lawyer to dispute the contents of an article published in *Flanders Today* on 3 February, 2010, which mentions that I attempted to defraud Rolls Royce, that a test drive with Rolls Royce did not take place and that I carried out this attempt on my own initiative for personal gain.

This whole stunt was organised by me with the newspaper *La Capitale*, and the Rolls Royce salesman agreed to a test drive without even realising it was all a joke. At present, I work for the anti-fraud department of a credit card company. Having spotted my ability to deceive people, my employer gave me the opportunity to trap the ill-intentioned.

I am rather upset at the defamatory nature of your article, which portrays me as a crook, whereas I have turned over a new leaf. Your article is an attack on my integrity and my image. I continue to have a deep respect for the profession of journalism, especially the Flemish who have a good sense of humour.

Abdelkarim Serhani

I have just read the preview of *Don Carlos* by Marie Dumont in your publication of 10 February. She states that "this production of the Vlaamse Opera is the first time the work is shown in its entirety in Belgium". This is incorrect. De Munt did a production of *Don Carlo* (to give it its correct name) about 25 years ago. It was noted for the enormous staircase that the poor singers had to negotiate while singing. She also states that the Flemish envoys sing in French. As the Vlaamse Opera always puts on productions in the original language, I would be very surprised if there would be any French in it.

Ann Englander
Tervuren

Editor responds:

Although Giuseppe Verdi, an Italian, composed the music for *Don Carlos*, the original libretto was written by Camille du Locle and Joseph Méry in French for the Paris Opera. (It was soon translated into Italian.) Because the Vlaamse Opera is indeed performing it in the original language, they are performing it in French. The title *Don Carlos* is the original French; *Don Carlo* is the Italian title. De Munt has performed *Don Carlos* four times, including in French, but these were all truncated versions of the opera, which, in its entirety, is four hours long. Therefore, this production of *Don Carlos* by the Vlaamse Opera is the first time the work is being shown in its entirety in Belgium.

Flanders will have 800 **too few teachers in 2011** – 400 each in pre-school and primary levels, according to figures presented last week by the education committee of the Flemish Parliament. Overall, the education system in the region will require 2,415 extra pre-school teach-

ers, 3,239 primary teachers and 4,139 secondary teachers. But those posts will not all be filled: for example, in a survey taken in March last year, 77% of the vacancies in primary schools went unfilled, as well as 81% posts in junior secondary and 76% in senior secondary.



A team of 13 scientists made their way home to Belgium from the Antarctic last week, having completed work on the Princess Elisabeth polar station (pictured). Final work before the onset of the polar winter included starting up the water management system and installing an antenna aimed at the ASTRA satellite. This means that "scientists can communicate via broadband on a permanent basis, and the station can be better controlled from Belgium," explained Michel de Wouters, director of the International Polar Foundation (IPF), based in Brussels. There are still about 20 people in the station, including polar explorer Alain Hubert. They are due to return at the end of the month.



"Another black day for Flanders" as trains collide

→ continued from page 1

Train services between Brussels and Mons and between Brussels and Tournai were suspended due to damage to overhead cables, and Thalys and Eurostar trains were diverted away from the scene, while subsequent international trains were cancelled between Brussels South Station and both London and Paris. The governor of Flemish Brabant, Lodewijk De Witte, immediately set up a crisis centre to coordinate the rescue effort.

Many passengers were able to leave the wreckage by themselves, while the more seriously injured were carried to the station square in Halle. Buses were brought in to ferry passengers to their destinations, while passengers requiring treatment were transported to hospitals in Leuven, Aalst, Ukkel, Jette and the Erasmus hospital in Anderlecht. The Flemish Red Cross sent an SMS to donors asking for donations of

"O" and "A" blood to cope with the increased demand.

According to one passenger, speaking to VRT news, the 's Gravenbrakel train was travelling at low speed after leaving the station in Halle when the collision occurred. Witnesses described the sound of braking followed by a loud crash. Passengers remained calm, one man said.

Governor De Witte, mayor Pieters and federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom held a joint press conference where it was announced that the train travelling from Leuven had gone through a red signal, though it was not yet clear whether it was human error or a technical fault. The rail authority NMBS issued a press release saying they could not speculate on possible causes for the crash but would release information as it became available.

From San Francisco, where he is attending the Flanders Trade, Innovation & Investment Mission, minister-president Kris Peeters sent a message thanking the emergency services for their speedy and effective response. "This is another black day for Flanders," he said. "My thoughts are with the victims and their families. I hope they will be able



© Belga

to receive the care they need as quickly as possible. I remain in close contact with the municipal and provincial governments."

King Albert and prime minister Yves Leterme were both abroad when the news broke. As *Flanders Today* went to press, there were both returning to Belgium and planned to visit the site of the accident together.

Also on the scene was an investigating magistrate from the Brussels prosecutor's office, as well as the prosecutor himself, Bruno Bulthé. They were accompanied by an expert accident investigator and two other magistrates.

The accident is the most serious in recent Belgian rail history. In

January 2001, once person was killed on a TGV line in Borgworm, while in March of the same year eight people died when two trains collided on the Waver-Leuven line at Pécrot. That accident also involved a signal passed at red. Since then, despite accidents involving up to 52 injured, no fatalities have occurred on Belgium's railways. The worst accident ever was in 1908 in Kontich, when 40 died.

The Buizingen accident was immediately the lead item on the BBC News website, as well as main news sites in the Netherlands, France, Germany and Italy. ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



€19,200,000

raised so far by the Haiti-Lavi 12-12 action in favour of the victims of the Haiti earthquake, which left more than a million people homeless. The money, intended to help with reconstruction efforts, continues to come in

1,191

incidents of aggression towards rail staff in the first 11 months of 2009, an increase of 27% on the year before. Part of the reason was the increased number of passengers, but late trains may also have played a role, NMBS Holding said

€21,700,000,000

in uncollected taxes at the end of last year, according to the civil servant at the head of the tax authority's collection service, speaking to parliament last week. Of that figure, at least €8.6 billion has little chance of ever being collected

3,246

Flemish students took part in the Erasmus foreign exchange programme in the academic year 2008-2009. Including other exchange programmes, the number of students studying abroad was 12.5%. The government aims to reach 20% by 2020

230,000

pupils taking part in the Fruit at School programme, financed by the Flemish government, which provides fruit for schoolchildren to stimulate healthy eating habits

MNM sees figures tumbling

MNM, the newest radio station of the public broadcaster VRT, has slipped below the threshold of 10% of market share, according to figures released last week by the Centre for Information on the Media (CIM). But the VRT and Q-group, which owns Q Music and Joe FM, have criticised the ratings system for apparently inexplicable sudden shifts.

Just before it was replaced by MNM last year, Radio Donna – once the biggest broadcaster in Flanders – scored 12.5%. In an earlier ratings round in May last year, MNM scored 11.5%, but now it has slipped back to 9.8%, putting it in fourth place

behind Radio 2, Q Music and Studio Brussel.

However, both Radio 2 and Q Music have suffered painful drops in their ratings; Radio 2 down from 32.1% to 28.8% in the past year, and Q Music from 17.2% to 14.7%. Both broadcasters carry out their own permanent audience research, which does not tally with the CIM figures. "In that research you can also identify certain trends in the radio world," said Peter Bossaert of Q-group. "But you never come across sudden shifts as in the CIM figures."

VRT concurs, with figures showing Radio 2 doing very well. The VRT

has repeated calls for a change to the ratings system, with more frequent reporting, perhaps along the lines of the monthly report carried out by the equivalent body in the Netherlands.

The fall in the ratings for MNM comes as no surprise: just last month station manager Greet Santy, who helped bring the new station to air, was fired and replaced by Rino Ver Eecke from Radio 2. "The listeners will have noticed that a lot has changed since 1 January," he said last week. "I am convinced we can make MNM into a fresh, young hits station." ♦

Flanders still hoping for Olympic glory

LEO CENDROWICZ

Flanders is hanging onto its hopes for a medal in Vancouver, Canada, despite disappointments early on in the 21st Winter Olympics.

A Flemish athlete on the podium is a long shot, especially when Pieter Gysel failed to reach the final of the 1,500-metre short track skating event. Leuven-born Gysel, 29, was Belgium's biggest medal hope and had the second-best time in the heats, but trailed in ninth in the semi-final. He is now focusing his attention on two other races, the 500m and the 1,000m.

But there are seven other Belgian athletes in Vancouver, four of them from Flanders. They include Elsje Willemse and Eva Willemarck in the women's bobsleigh and Jeroen Van den Bogaert and Bart Mollin in the men's slalom. This year's Belgian flag bearer is 2009 European Figure Skating bronze medallist Kevin Van der Perren. The last Belgian or Flemish winter Olympic medal was the bronze for Bart Veldkamp for 5,000m speed skating in the 1998 Nagano games. ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

The many lives of Frank Vandenbroucke

At the age of 34, the Flemish socialist Frank Vandenbroucke became one of the youngest party presidents ever. He went on to become foreign minister, but had to resign amidst a corruption scandal involving his party (sp.a). Vandenbroucke temporarily left politics, to study in Oxford. When he came back, his economic theories formed the basis of the so called "purple" governments (composed of liberals and socialists) lead by Guy Verhofstadt. Vandenbroucke started a new life as one of this country's most respected politicians.

Within his party, Vandenbroucke formed a seemingly unbeatable team with Steve Stevaert, Johan Vande Lanotte and Patrick Janssens. This was new to him, as Vandenbroucke has always managed to alienate the people close to him. As party president, the ascetic ways he introduced enervated his older colleagues. He was also known as the professor, forever lecturing about what he thinks is right for this country. Still, at the time of the "Teletubbies", as the four were known, his party learned how to live with Vandenbroucke. Even Stevaert, who publicly abhorred intellectuals, tolerated him. And in spite of his often unpopular messages and leftist points of view, Vandenbroucke became popular with the public at large, who appreciated his ministerial style.

At the end of the Teletubbies era, Vandenbroucke was the last one standing of his generation. He became a pillar of the socialist party in the Flemish government, where he formed a sort of partnership with minister-president Kris Peeters (CD&V). Within his party, though, he became more and more isolated as he stubbornly went his own way, regardless of party strategy. In the end, sp.a pushed him aside after the 2009 elections, leaving him without a portfolio.

Vandenbroucke kept quiet for some months, licking his wounds and refusing to comment on the bitter episode. Now he is back, in his own typical manner: with a solid essay on the future of the welfare state.

As per usual, this contains some inconvenient truths. Safeguarding the welfare state will require huge budgetary efforts from which the middle classes will not be spared, Vandenbroucke says. He proposes to start by making the subsidised service cheques, which pay for small domestic services, more expensive.

The sp.a, still Vandenbroucke's party, feels uncomfortable about all of this. It is annoyed, once again, by his timing, drawing attention away from the party's pension plan. Still, sp.a will have to find a way of living with Frank Vandenbroucke, for he has obviously started yet another new life.



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Countdown to the Great War

As Talbot House reminds us of the life of the soldiers,
Lijssenthoek reminds us how many never made it home

DENZIL WALTON

The Flemish Region is putting much time, effort and funding into First World War monuments right now, in the lead up to 100 jaar Grote Oorlog in de Westhoek (Centenary of the Great War in the Westhoek), the 100th anniversary of the First World War. This will be commemorated across the country with special events during the period 1914 to 1918.

For almost the entire duration of the First World War, Poperinge, near Ypres, remained one of the few unoccupied towns in Flanders. Located 10 kilometres behind the front line and with a good railway connection to Ypres, it was a natural destination for soldiers looking to find some relaxation.

Occasionally it was shelled by a long-range German missile but, for the most part, Poperinge was untouched. It therefore soon became a bustling town full of shops, cafés and restaurants catering to the needs of war-weary troops. "Shall we pop into Pop?" became a popular catchphrase amongst British soldiers.

The importance of "Pop" soon became apparent to two British Army chaplains serving with the 6th Division: Philip "Tubby" Clayton and Neville Talbot. They decided to open up a soldiers' club and began looking for a suitable site.

Coincidentally, a property owned by local hop merchant Maurice Coevoet became available. After his house was damaged by a stray German shell, he decided to move out of Poperinge with his wife and children. Negotiations began between him and the British Army, and a monthly rent of 150 Belgian Francs was agreed for the duration of the war.

After some modifications, the house opened its doors to British soldiers for the first time on 11 December, 1915. It was named Talbot House in remembrance of Neville's brother Gilbert, who had recently been killed at Hooge.

Right from the start, Talbot House was a different kind of soldier's club: warm, cosy and inviting. The sign - "Every Man's Club" - still hangs outside, indicating that Talbot House was for the normal soldier, not just an officers' club.

"It was just an ordinary house where ordinary soldiers could feel at home for a day or two," explains Dries Chaerle, Talbot House's curator. "They could buy postcards or soap in the small shop or write a letter home. They could read a book in the library or sit and smoke with their mates in the garden. They could even sleep here overnight."

The first floor of the neighbouring hop store was converted into a concert hall for debates, movies and live shows. Talbot House grew to become one of the most important institutions of the British Army.

Lijssenthoek Cemetery

In the spring of 1915, the hamlet of Lijssenthoek, just south of Poperinge, became involved in the war effort. The large farm owned by Remi Quaghebeur, a few kilometres behind the front and next to the Poperinge-Ypres railway line, became home to four field hospitals with 4,000 hospital beds.

These field hospitals took in wounded men evacuated from vast swathes of the front. Those who did not survive were buried in the military cemetery nearby. Lijssenthoek (pictured here and on our cover) thus provides a witness to more than four years of daily warfare in the Ypres Salient. It contains 9,901 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 883 war graves of other nationalities, mostly French and German. It is the second largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world (after Tyne Cot in Ypres).

Last summer, a research project began at Lijssenthoek to use the cemetery as a mirror, producing "Daily Reflections of the Great War". "The Lijssenthoek field hospitals were busy throughout the war; every day at least one soldier died there," says Annemie Morisse, who is leading the project. "You can therefore find every single date of the year on a headstone in the cemetery – even February 29. This sombre fact reflects the unceasing daily nature of the Great War. It wasn't just about major battles; it was four years of continuous, daily combat and death." "Daily Reflections" will also try to deconstruct the history of the war through the nearly 11,000 known, historical graves – and as many personal stories. As much information is therefore needed. If you knew someone who is buried at Lijssenthoek, you are invited to go the website, complete the information form and participate in the project.

The longest surviving First World War veteran, Harry Patch, who died just last year at age 111, was also fond of Talbot House: "A lot of us used to call it 'the haven' because that's exactly what this place was to the men – a place of peace where you could relax, and the only time you could forget the strains of war for a couple of hours." At the end of the war in 1918, the original owners returned, and Talbot House reverted to a family home. But for thousands of former soldiers, Talbot House remained in their memory. In 1931, it was purchased by Lord Wakefield of Hythe who donated it to the newly-formed Talbot House Association, which still owns it today.

House in hiding

During the Second World War, Poperinge was occupied by the German army. Fearing for the safety of the historically-valuable items inside Talbot House, a team of local people secretly emptied it. They split the collection throughout the town and found a hiding place for every painting, book and piece of furniture.

Indeed, the house became a German officers' mess. But with the liberation of Poperinge in 1944, every single item was brought back to the house. The authentic interior of the house has been excellently preserved, and the unique spirit of the place can perhaps be best experienced in the loft. Previously used for drying hops, it was converted into a chapel

and became known as the "Upper Room". On the initiative of the soldiers, the chapel was furnished with an altar made from a carpenter's bench found in the garden shed. Candlesticks were made from bedposts. A portable organ was brought in, and wooden benches made or acquired from damaged churches.

Talbot House is open to the public, including for overnight stays. For me, two perfectly preserved mementos brought home the stark reality that, although Talbot

House was a wonderful place of recreation after the rigours of war, it could only ever be a temporary shelter – a brief respite before the trudge back to the trenches of Ypres or Passchendaele.

At the wooden stools in the Upper Room, numerous young soldiers would have prayed their final prayers before returning to battle. And in the hall, the visitors' book displays their shaky signatures. For many, it would have been the last time they signed their name.♦

→ www.talbothouse.be

2014-2018

It may not be for four years, but preparations to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War are already in full swing. Flemish minister of tourism Geert Bourgeois is working closely with the West Flanders Tourist organisation Westtoer on the initiative 100 jaar Grote Oorlog in de Westhoek (Centenary of the Great War in the Westhoek). Five projects have top priority:

- An expansion of the In Flanders Fields museum in Ypres
- A new visitor centre at Lijssenthoek Cemetery
- A garden at the Passchendaele 1917 Memorial Museum in Zonnebeke
- A new museum in the Ijzertoren (Yser Tower) memorial in Diksmuide
- A new visitor centre at Ganzenpoort, home to the King Albert 1 monument, in Nieuwpoort

"We confidently expect at least two million people to visit the Westhoek in that period," says Bourgeois. 100 jaar Grote Oorlog will last five years and include special exhibitions, concerts, ceremonies and walking and cycling routes.



Talbot House: the same as it was 95 years ago, both inside and out



© Lijssenthoek Project

© Talbot House archives

A pig relief

New treatment for swine fever could avoid slaughter

ALAN HOPE

Researchers in the virology department of the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), together with the Veterinary and Agrochemical Research Centre (CODA) in Brussels, have developed a treatment for swine fever which could eliminate the need for mass slaughter of affected pig herds.

Classical Swine Fever (CSF) is a highly contagious disease that affects pigs and wild boars. It can be devastating in its effects, both on herds and on the industry. Also known as pig cholera, it spreads rapidly through a herd and has severe symptoms, including high fever, diarrhoea, chills, loss of unborn litters and high mortality.

CSF is considered to be endemic in Central and Eastern Europe. Western Europe is a fringe region; while currently free of the virus, there is always a chance it will return through Central Europe or Germany. Austria, Germany and Poland suffer the risk of infection from the wild boar population.

The virus persists in carcases and in frozen and even cured pork; while humans are not affected, such meat does wind up in pig feed. Fortunately, the virus cannot be spread by wind, insects or birds, so is relatively easy to

isolate. A vaccine exists, but it is not permitted for routine use and usually only comes into play in healthy herds in the vicinity of an outbreak.

The usual treatment is for the infected herd, and all others within a radius of one kilometre, to be slaughtered, which is a severe blow for farmers, even with compensation. In an outbreak in the Netherlands in 1997-98, about two million pigs were slaughtered, most of them healthy. The cost of the outbreak to the industry was estimated at €250 million.

The new research has uncovered a means of stopping the spread of the virus within the herd by blocking the possibility of one pig infecting another, even when kept in close proximity. In addition, the treatment can be used as a prophylaxis: when an outbreak is signalled on one farm, other farms within a designated area can use the treatment as a preventative measure.

The new treatment is being developed to be added to feed by Okapi Sciences, a spin-off of the KUL, Liège University and the Academy of Sciences in Prague. The process could take several years. ♦

→ www.kuleuven.be/research



The Proba 2 satellite is now in position facing the Sun

Proba 2 satellite begins work

Belgium's Proba 2 satellite has begun its scientific investigations in space, three months after its launch from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in northern Russia.

Proba 2 (pictured) was built by Verhaert Space, based in Kruibeke, East Flanders, which also supplied the Advanced Data and Power Management System computer. Although it is small, measuring only 60 x 60 x 80 centimetres, it contains 17 different technologies and material for four experiments looking at solar and space weather.

The satellite's main target is the sun, and engineers from Verhaert operating from the European Space Agency's (ESA) ground station at Redu were able to steer it using the satellite's computer and orbit controls. The satellite's two main instruments will look at the solar corona – a region extending one million kilometres above the surface, where temperatures reach two million degrees – and the ultraviolet radiation emitted by the sun.

"Now that the satellite is stabilised in solar observation mode, the two main instruments have been switched on, and a health check has been performed successfully," the company said in a statement. "The data acquisition and processing systems located in Redu are also working well. The official delivery to ESA of the fully operational system can take place now that everything has been tested and aligned".

→ www.esa.int/esaMI/Proba

Tech sector loses 10,000 jobs

The technology sector in Flanders can expect the loss of 10,000 jobs this year, bringing the total for 2009-2010 to 33,000 jobs, or 11% of the total technology workforce. That's the gloomy prediction of the industry federation Agoria, based on forecasts of a lack of investment in industry in general and the construction industry in particular.

But production in tech-related industries as a whole is expected to increase by 3.5% this year, with metals and materials even seeing 6% growth. However, according to Agoria director-general Paul Soete, "in the long term, there is a part of the industrial production lost in the economic crisis which will never return." ♦

→ www.agoria.be

Feeding pollution to bacteria

Tessenderlo Chemie has announced the start of an innovative new project to improve the cleaning of polluted industrial sites using bacteria. The chemicals company will cooperate in the project with Ghent University and independent pollution experts. The work will be carried out on Tessenderlo's monovinyl chloride factory, which has for many years been affected by severe ground pollution.

The sources of the pollution have now been eliminated, and the project – which has received funding from the EU's LIFE+ programme – will introduce the bacterium known as *Desulfitobacterium dichloroeliminans strain DCA1*.

The bacterium can respire in conditions where oxygen is absent by a process known as dehalorespiration. It provides itself with energy by breaking down the chlorine-based compounds causing the pollution, mainly dichloroethane, or DCA. This is the most abundant chlorine pollutant of groundwater on the planet, but the bacterium essentially eats it up and excretes what's left as harmless compounds. ♦

New scanners faster and safer

The radiology department of the Ghent University Hospital has acquired two new CT scanners that promise to improve medical imaging, making it faster, safer and more accurate.

Computed tomography scans, often called cat-scans, build up a picture of the internal organs of the body by taking X-rays of thin slices of tissue, which are then converted by computer into a 3D representation. The process is widely used to detect bleeding or tissue changes or to screen for conditions like colon cancer. It can also be used in real time to help guide a needle, for example, when taking a biopsy of brain tissue.

The new scanners, the university said, are more accurate and faster, which means they will be able to perform scans of the heart. Until recently, that was a problem because the organ never stays still, and the resulting images were often unusable.

The new scanners also emit a fraction of the radiation emitted by older scanners and allow the dose to be adjusted according to the patient. ♦

Oxfam campaigns against chocolate

Nearly all of the chocolate in supermarkets could be the product of child labour

ALAN HOPE

As much as 99% of the chocolate on the shelves of Flanders' supermarkets could be the product of child labour or even slavery, according to a new campaign launched last week by Oxfam to coincide with Valentine's Day. Although chocolate is normally associated with the New World, and especially Mexico where it originated, Ivory Coast in West Africa is now the main producer. Together with Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon, the Ivory Coast supplies 70% of the world's chocolate. Right now, production is down and stocks are low, leading to the highest prices since 1985. Production in those four countries, however, is the work of two million small farmers and their families. Primary producers are poor, often relying on the labour of low-wage children.

More than 200 million children work worldwide, according to estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). About 70% of those work in agriculture. For many, work is a matter of survival for themselves or for their families. The number employed in the cocoa production industry in West Africa is thought to be in the tens of thousands; in some cases, the children may have been bought from their parents and brought from Burkina Faso to work – a modern form of slavery. Even in the best of cases, the work is hard and heavy, and the children have little or no schooling.

"Cocoa producers in West Africa can hardly survive on the income from the cocoa harvest and live in extreme poverty," said Marieke Poissonnier, commodities policy advisor to Oxfam-Wereldwinkels. "That extreme poverty is at the root of the worst forms of child labour."

Oxfam's campaign proposes fair trade as a solution to the problem. The organisation calls on consumers, government and the chocolate industry to switch to fair-trade products, which provide producers with more of an income. "Minimum pricing, community premiums, investment financing and the assurance of a long-term trade relationship offer the members of fair-trade cooperatives the chance to break out of the vicious circle of extreme poverty," Poissonnier said.

In Brussels, a spokesperson for Kraft, which owns Belgian market leader Cote d'Or, admitted that child labour is a problem in the cocoa industry. He argued that it is difficult to eradicate because the production side is so fragmented, with 90% of world production coming from more than three million smallholders, according to the International Cocoa Organisation.

"There are millions of cocoa producers," said Dionne Heijnen, corporate affairs manager at Kraft. "We cannot guarantee that there are no



Children and chocolate: These are the kids of the cocoa farmer himself, a partner of Oxfam's fair trade programme, but some kids are not so lucky

child labourers working among them or that our chocolate is produced without child labour." However, the company is taking steps to tackle the problem by buying beans certified by the Rainforest Alliance. "Plantations where child labour is used automatically lose their certificate. In 2012, all of Cote d'Or's chocolate will need to have that certification," she said.

Barry Callebaut, whose factory in Lebbeke, East Flanders, is one of the biggest in the world, announced last month that there is a rise in demand for certified cocoa and chocolate products, as consumers increasingly ask for chocolate that is "responsibly produced".

"Barry Callebaut welcomes this evolution, given its long-standing commitment to developing a more sustainable cocoa sector, beginning with local growers," the company said in a statement. "The group expects that the sale of certified products will continue to grow significantly in 2010."

The company operates its own "Quality Partner Programme" in the Ivory Coast. Launched in 2005, it involves 47 cooperatives and over 42,000 farmers. "While demand for organic certified chocolate has been growing steadily over the past 10 years, we have seen a jump of more than 50% in the demand for fair-trade certified products in 2009 and an increase of 12% in certified products volume overall," said Callebaut's chief innovation officer Hans Vriens. "These growth rates are significantly ahead of chocolate market growth rates. We are now complementing our offering with UTZ certified and Rainforest Alliance Certified products. This means that we will have products available that meet the standards of some or more of the most widely recognised sustainability labels in the world." ♦

Surprise judgement means green light for Oosterweel Link

A restaurant owner who complained about the Lange Wapper viaduct in Antwerp has had his case thrown out by the Council of State. Gunther Dieltjens, who owns the imposing Pomphuis restaurant in the riverside area of the city known as het Eilandje, argued that the planned viaduct would have passed directly over his premises, shadowing his riverside terrace.

The complaint, however, alleged that the environmental impact report drawn up for the controversial viaduct was not fair and not unbiased. His claim was accepted by the auditor to the Council of State, but, unusually, that advice has now been rejected.

The Lange Wapper is the local name given to the Oosterweel Link, which is designed to close the Antwerp Ring and make it easier for traffic from the left bank of the Scheldt, where port facilities are sited, to gain access to the motorways leading to the Netherlands, Germany and the south. The planned viaduct passes through a populated area of the centre of the city, and protestors complained it would be a health hazard and do little to ease congestion.

The effect of the Pomphuis interim judgement was to freeze the planning procedure, with the threat that the whole process might have to be restarted,

with delays of up to three years. Meanwhile, Antwerp residents voted in a referendum last year against the viaduct.

What will take its place is anyone's guess, but last week's decision by the Council of State at least means the Flemish government can once again pick up the dossier and, one way or another, reach a decision. "We shouldn't be talking here about winners and losers," commented minister-president Kris Peeters on hearing the judgement. "What is important is that everyone wins with a good solution, and that we in the Flemish government manage to find that good solution." ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • Dexia

Dexia, the Belgo-French financial institution specialised in funding local authorities, has won EU approval for its restructuring plan. This includes the sale of its Italian Credioip and Spanish Sabadel affiliates, together with its Slovakian retail and Turkish insurance operations. The decision entails a reduction of 35% of the bank's total balance sheet by 2014 at the latest.

Chemicals • Solvay

Brussels-based chemicals and plastics firm Solvay is to invest €5 million in its Antwerp Solvin joint venture with Germany's BASF to develop a one-megawatt fuel cell. The technology could lead to the production of cells with the capacity to power trucks, buses and ships.

Cinema • Barco

Barco, the Kortrijk-based TV and cinema equipment developer, has begun a major project to install 3,500 digital projectors in 300 cinemas owned by the US-based Cinemark screening group. The deal is said to be worth some €75 million.

Hotel • Sodehotel

Sodehotel is to invest €17 million to build 74 additional rooms. The hotel, located in the Brussels commune of Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, is owned by China's Hainan Airlines. It was previously owned by the former national airline Sabena.

Savings • Figures

Funds held in Belgian savings accounts increased by €39 billion last year to reach a record €189 billion, according to the National Bank. Savers deposited no less than €5.7 billion in December 2009 alone.

Steel • Bekaert

Bekaert, the Zwevegem-based steel wire producer will pay €70 million to acquire two tyre production units from Japan's Bridgestone, one in Sardinia and the other in Guangdong, China. The deal includes a long-term contract to supply Bekaert steel cord to Bridgestone tyre production units worldwide.

Stockbrokerage • Exane

French stockbroker Exane, which is 50% owned by France's BNP Paribas, will open a branch in Brussels before the end of June.

Venture capital • GIMV

GIMV, the Flemish government venture capital firm, has sold its stake in CoWare, the US-based electronics systems design software and services company, to Nasdaq-quoted Synopsys. The deal resulted in a €6 million book profit.

The only way forward is back

Internationally renowned Koen van den Broek woos Belgium with two shows

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Koen van den Broek has risen to fame in the past 10 years, although he has attracted more attention abroad than in Belgium. Two exhibitions should readjust that. In Antwerp, you'll find his works on paper and in Ghent's museum of contemporary art, SMAK, are the paintings from the last decade that have made him famous.

Before even entering SMAK's exhibition *Curbs & Cracks*, I was floored by a huge wall painting. It's a first for the artist, and it's by far his largest work ever, 8 x 12 metres. Although based on a pedestrian bridge in New York, it also looks like two looming skyscrapers, on the verge of collapsing.

"It was hard to find an image that could be integrated in the museum," he tells me. "The SMAK is almost symmetrical, and I've played with that by placing the painting a bit more to the right." The deal was that the painting is a SMAK exclusive, to be destroyed after the exhibition. "I must say that now I have regrets," Van den Broek says.

The title *Curbs & Cracks* refers to the Antwerp-based artist's favourite visual themes: borders of pavements, bridges, a gas station, cracks in the road. It looks like the remnants of human existence, a world sucked dry of people.

"Why would I paint people?" he asks. "I'm much more interested in traces they leave behind. Such paintings are often psychological. I love architecture, and I almost construct my paintings as technical drawings; you don't see people on those, either. It's a scientific approach. The most important architectural artefact is probably a road. The first feat man accomplishes on an untouched piece of land is finding a way to cross it. Only then, when he's able to move from A to B, does he start thinking vertically." So "The Farm" comes as big surprise: we see a pig, a goat and other animals. Or do we? "In 1999, I visited the Bronx, and in a front garden I saw animals – not real ones but cut out of wood. So what looks like living things are, once again, architectural objects. I took a picture of them – quickly, because it wasn't a time where you would want to draw attention to yourself in the Bronx. The image was blurry, out of focus, and that's how I painted it."

Van den Broek's paintings are often, though not always, based on the heaps and heaps of photos he makes on the road. "Never digital," he explains, "because that leaves you with too many choices." But the paintings are far from

photo-realistic since it's no use repeating what has been done before. He is also strongly inspired by cinema.

His subjects give Van den Broek the chance to explore the fine line between abstraction and figuration. But even if the paintings look abstract, like "Orange & Black Border", the title clearly links with reality.

"Is it still possible to make abstract paintings?" he asks. "Look at some of the big shots of contemporary American art, like John Currin or Elizabeth Peyton: they are very figurative. Probably because during the second half of the 20th century, their

artists, from Donald Judd

to Robert Morris, have strongly opted for such radical abstract art; they bumped into the boundaries of abstraction. So the only way, I think, to go forward in painting is to go back."

The exhibition, put together by the reputed British curator Andrew Renton and SMAK-man Thibaut Verhoeven, is not a chronological overview of his work, Van den Broek stresses. "The question of how an artist's oeuvre has evolved is often irrelevant," he says. "It certainly is with mine, since I go back to the same elements over and over again."

That repetition sometimes gives him pause: "In starting a new painting, qualms of doubt come over me. Even after finishing it, I can wonder for a long time if it deserves a place between my other work." A lot of paintings never even leave his studio. "A year ago, I destroyed 300 paintings. I just bought a new studio, and when I move, I can imagine destroying some more."

And throwing away a lot of money, one might say. Flemish daily *De Tijd* recently disclosed that a Van den Broek



Viaduct, 2002

painting costs €20,000. "They threw some figures together and made an average," he smiles. "I always say it varies from the price of a small car to the price of a big one." But the prices could be much higher. "Four years ago, my gallerist wanted to raise them, but I found it irrelevant to sell my paintings for like €100,000. I'm only 36. Museums, but also people I like, wouldn't be able to buy them anymore. And it's more important to be in the right collection than to make as much money as possible." *

Curbs & Cracks

Until 16 May
Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)
Citadelpark, Ghent

www.smak.be

Preview in Antwerp

In the Prentenkabinet (Print Room) of Antwerp's Fine Arts Museum hangs a small but interesting collection of Van den Broek's recent work on paper. No drawings, but acrylic paintings (although they look like gouaches). They were selected by Nico Van Hout, a famous Rubens specialist.

"It was the first time, he said, that he worked with an artist who wasn't dead yet," Van den Broek jokes. But then gets serious: "He made the selection, and he hung all the works without consulting me." The artist doesn't feel himself out of place amongst the old masters. "I'm extremely interested in Tintoretto, El Greco and Rubens."

Based on the title *Preview*, some visitors think these works are studies, but they aren't, says Van den Broek. "Anyway, I don't think many artists make studies. I think, and in some cases I know for sure, that so-called studies are made after the fact – because it's easy money. The photos I take are my preparation. It might happen that one image lead to a work on paper and one on a canvas, but in that case they're equal."

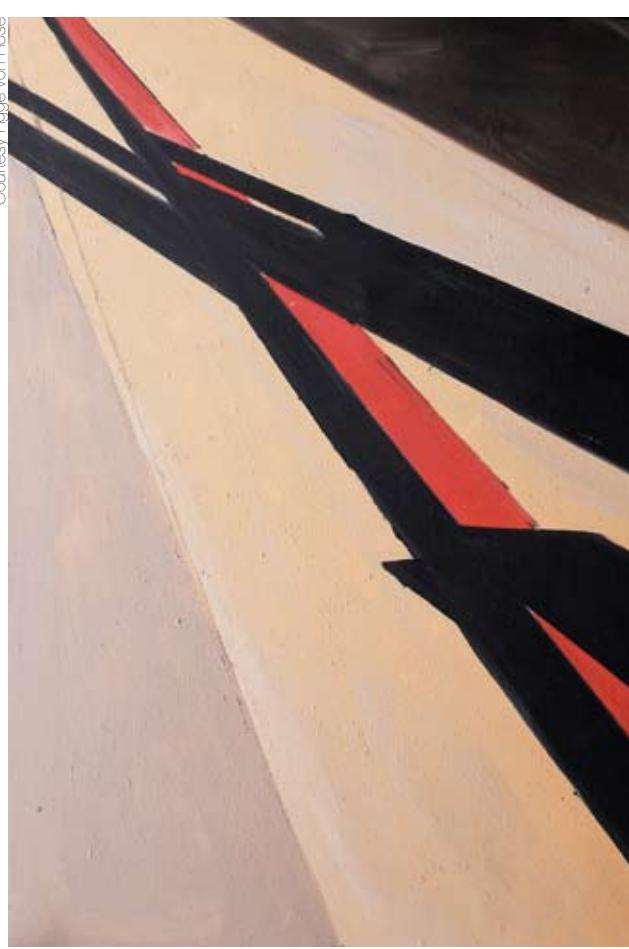
Van den Broek hadn't worked on paper for 10 years. "I couldn't do it; it was always a mess". But he tried it, as an exercise to free his mind when he was staying in Los Angeles for a while, and, to his own surprise, he succeeded. Repeating the effort in Belgium turned out to be much more difficult. But, asked if the title *Preview* suggests there's more to come, he answers: "That might be the case."

Until 28 February

Fine Arts Museum
Leopold Dewaelplaats, Antwerp

www.kmska.be

Courtesy Figge van Rose



Koen Van den Broek in Doel during a session in which several painters worked directly on the walls of a house in the village that is being demolished to make way for the expansion of the Port of Antwerp

The book *Cracks*, a generous overview of Koen van den Broek's work, is now available and contains essays by, among others, Andrew Renton and Flemish arts and architecture critic Dirk Lauwaert.

You get what you need

A bear sets up a laundromat in Grace Ellen Barkey's new production

SHARON LIGHT

In one way, the name says it all. Needcompany is about needing company. The dance troupe's founders, Jan Lauwers and Grace Ellen Barkey, felt that this was the critical point in creating their art. Artists need collaborators, need an audience, need other artists.

And yet the name – and for that matter, even the artists – give you very little idea of what to expect when you walk into a Needcompany production. Even after an hour spent with Barkey discussing it, I wasn't sure what I would be seeing during her premiere of *This door is too small (for a bear)* in Brussels later this month.

Or did I?

And does it matter?

Needcompany was founded in 1986, riding on the "Flemish wave", a period of radical, groundbreaking work by Lauwers and other artists that achieved international recognition.

The Antwerp-born Lauwers studied painting in Ghent in the 1970s, but the pull of theatre was strong and led him to found Epigonentheater, a collaborative company whose foundational principle was that it had no director. But Lauwers saw that he was increasingly taking on this role, and he disbanded the company in the mid 1980s.

Barkey was born in Indonesia but joined up with Epigonentheater after her dance training in the Netherlands. She was the only member with a purely dance background, so, when she and Lauwers founded Needcompany in 1985, she became its choreographer. It was a haphazard turn of events that has led to an incredibly successful 25-year career as leading Belgian artists.

Needcompany's work has always been extremely visual but, while they started with more performance arts, they have expanded over the years into music, film, and visual art installations. Their multi-media, multi-language Sad Face/Happy

Face trilogy (*Isabella's Room*, *The Lobster Shop* and *The Deer House*) is a legend in Belgium and beyond. Since the prize-winning *Isabella's Room* premiered at the Avignon theatre festival in 2004, all three pieces have continuously been on tour throughout Europe.

In addition to original work, Needcompany has a long-standing relationship with Shakespeare, providing their own interpretations of plays such as *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*.

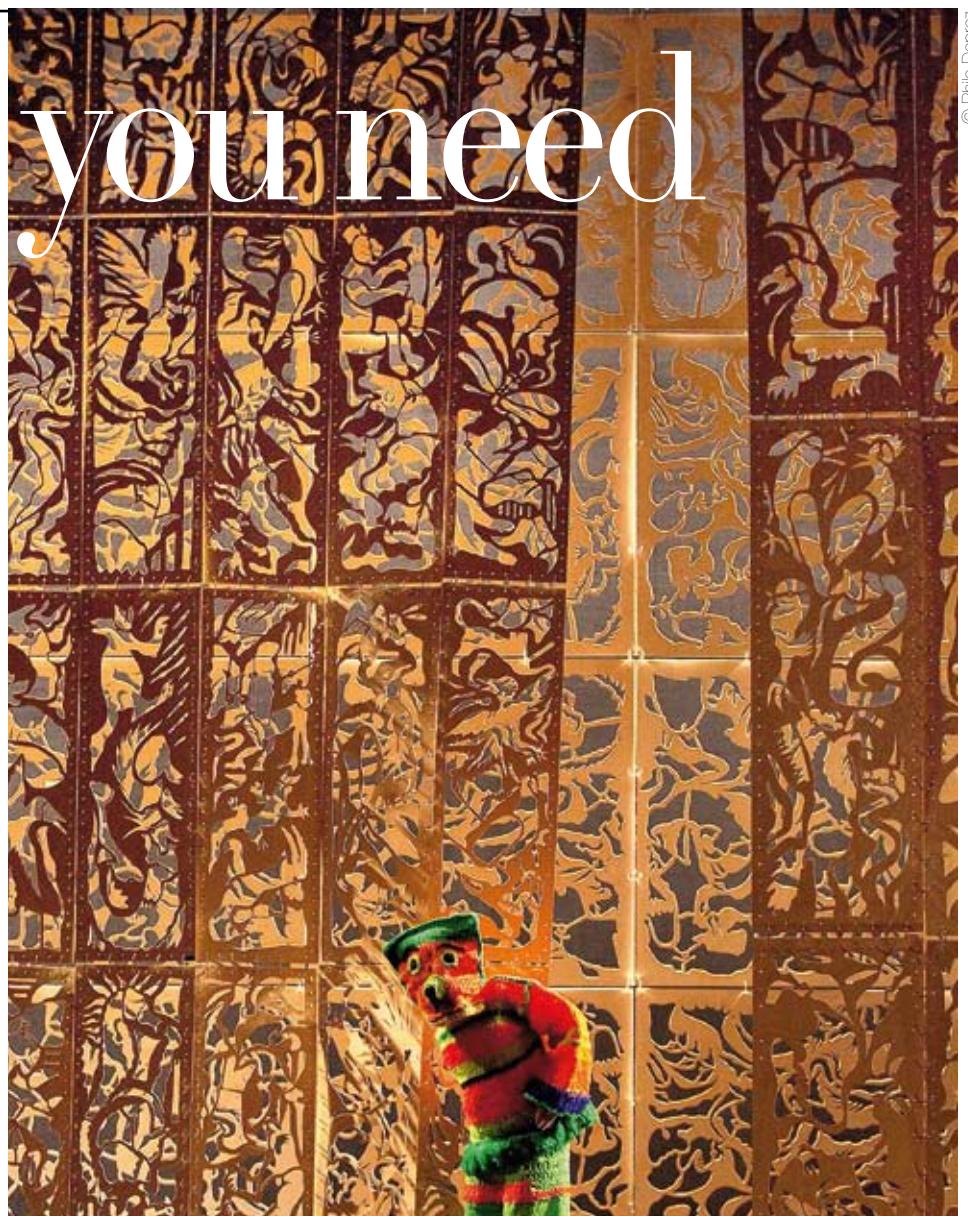
Lauwers and Barkey have a specifically complementary relationship. While Lauwers focuses more on theatre and storytelling, Barkey works in movement and abstraction. But both work with the same ensemble that is Needcompany, and Barkey says that this is what really sets them apart in Belgium.

"We take good care of our dancers, and they stay with the ensemble for many years," says Barkey. "I have worked with a lot of them for so long that I don't even need to use many words anymore."

Desperately optimistic

Barkey is loathe to discuss the future; her art is of the present. But not the present that we know or that we are living in. She specialises in alternate realities and imagination. Her work is not political, and it's not about current events.

"My pieces are worlds in themselves," she says. "I present to the audience a different way of looking. Often on stage lots of things are happening at the same time, and the audience can be their own 'camera.' With *This door is too small*, she wanted a funny piece that would make people laugh. As the production developed, she jumped on each chance to bring humour into it. The production revisits a few animal characters from previous Barkey work. The plot, to the extent that there is one, revolves around a bear who opens a laundromat; even as the laundromat is built, it



Grace Ellen Barkey's *This door is too small (for a bear)* premieres this month

falls apart and must be put together again. Barkey feels it is "desperately optimistic" and reflective of the human spirit. "You see Haiti, and the next thing you do is make dinner; there is this amazing energy that people have to go on living."

She also continues her love affair with the absurd and the grotesque – two adjectives she often uses. While she has always thought of her work as grotesque – in its modern sense implying irregularity and incongruity – she was thrilled that this production includes the "grotesque" in its original mediaeval meaning – a fantastical decoration of intertwined figures of humans, animals and plants.

This latter grotesque can be seen as the backdrop to the upcoming production, as conceived by designer Lot Lemm. Barkey has worked with her on several productions to develop what she calls the "image" of a piece, which ties together the production values, from sets to costumes, in one scheme.

These two artists have spun off some of their work under the title Lemm&Barkey, collaborating on a variety of projects, from installations to performance. The visual emphasis is clear. A 2007 production, *The Porcelain Project*, was an installation-cum-performance, using porcelain as sets, props and costumes, to stunning effect.

Barkey draws one further comparison to describe her work: poetry. "Poetry has a very strict form, but the meaning is not on the surface, it's in between the lines," she explains. "You read the content of the poem, but you aren't really sure what it means; it's like sand between your fingers. The next day, it means something different to you."

Ask Barkey what the title *This door is too small (for a bear)* refers to, and she answers with a question – one I imagine she wants all her work to ask: "What does it make you think?" For Barkey, it all comes down to the power of the imagination. She speaks

passionately of art's importance as a vehicle to open our eyes to new ways of seeing and to encourage our own creative processes.

Needcompany tours internationally, maintaining strong ties with various theatres and institutions. But Belgium affords them an artistic freedom and sense of stability that Barkey finds unique. They have also found a receptive audience here and a vibrant community of fellow artists. *This door is too small* takes them back to Brussels' Kaaitheater, a long-time collaborator.

Kaaitheater and Needcompany were both developing in the 1980s and the two linked up early on. In fact, "Needcompany was quite decisive in the artistic style that Kaaitheater stands for," says Guy Gypens, Kaaitheater's artistic director. "It was work that stood out as a real change of perspective in theatre, having to do with – amongst other things – the visual aspect of their productions."

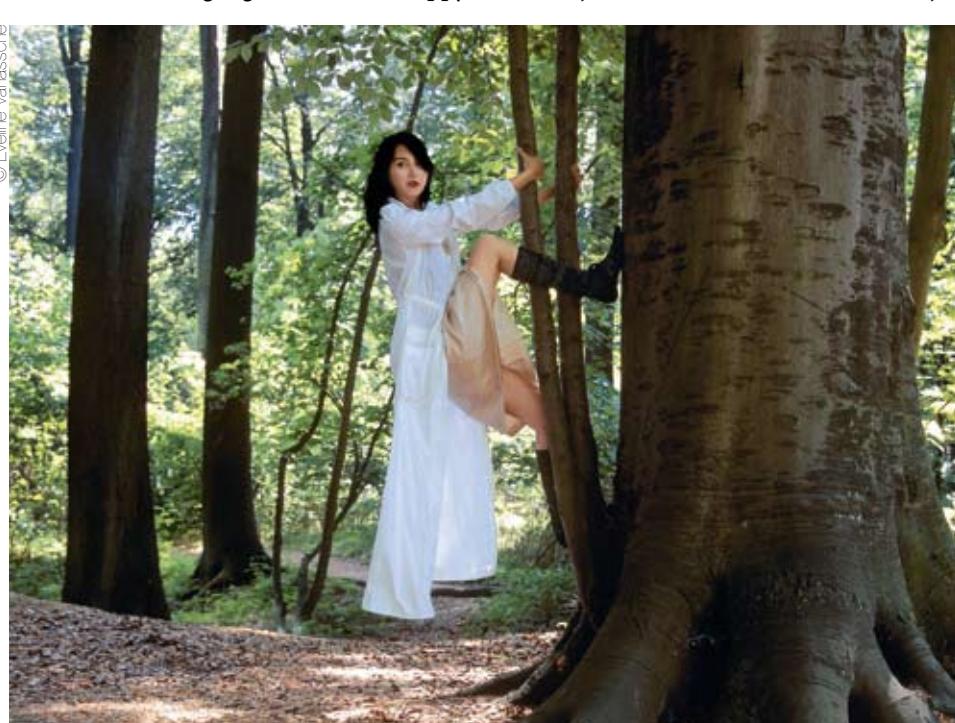
Gypens points to this quality as an influential factor in both the local and the international arts scene. While he sees a fluidity and logic in their performances, he is also aware that "they mix quite different registers – visual, physical and texts in multiple languages – that are not so easy to mix." ♦

→ www.needcompany.org

This door is too small (for a bear)

25-27 February
Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20
Brussels

www.kaaitheater.be



Fantastical decoration: Grace Ellen Barkey



A little bit of spring in February

Winter flowers are all the rage this month in Kalmthout

MELISSA MAKI

Every heard of a plant that creates brilliant flowers in the middle of winter, even a winter like this one? We hadn't, so when we got wind of a winter flower festival in Kalmthout, we decided to investigate.

When trees and flowers start to burst into colourful blossoms after a long, cold winter, we all start to feel alive again. In these rather cold, snowy days of February, spring still seems a long way off, but you need not wait that long for some colour therapy – just head to the Kalmthout Arboretum's Hamamelis Festival.

Hamamelis is the Latin name for the shrub we know as witch hazel. The different varieties featured at the Hamamelis Festival are prized for their ornamental value; they produce flowers with long, delicate petals in spectacular shades of yellow, red and orange throughout the winter. This off-season flowering is possible because witch hazel plants have adaptive, anti-freeze properties, and on very cold days, they roll up their flowers.

The plant's common name was given by North American colonists to *Hamamelis virginiana* (the common North American species) both because of its resemblance to hazelnut trees and its "bewitching" habit of flowering in the wrong season. That particular variety flowers in the autumn.

Hamamelis virginiana has a long history of being used medicinally, starting with the American Indians. The plant is known for its astringent and anti-inflammatory properties, and it's still commonly used today to treat a variety of ailments, from acne to varicose veins.

The development of witch hazel worldwide is largely due to the efforts of the Kalmthout Arboretum, established in 1856 at the edge of Antwerp province on the border with the Netherlands. It holds the oldest and largest collection of witch hazel on the continent. The arboretum has long been creating crosses between witch hazel plants and propagating particular characteristics such as hardiness, colour and scent.

Kalmthout's witch hazel collection is unique in that is not pruned or clipped, which allows you to see the plant in its natural state. The arboretum is organised in what

director Abraham Rammeloo describes as an "aesthetic arrangement." A "Hamamelis-route" signposted throughout takes you on a beautiful and leisurely stroll through the garden's grassy paths.

Along with witch hazel, you can expect to see other flowering plants in February, including hellebores and snowdrops. These two flowers are also part of the festival, and special events have been going on for each. While the hellebore activities have come to an end, on 27 and 28 February, galanthophiles (snowdrop collectors) will descend on the arboretum for Snowdrops Weekend, which includes an exhibition, lectures and a plant sale that includes rare species.

The 12-hectare arboretum, most of which is currently closed for the winter, also contains an exceptional array of other plants and trees, including 60 trees that are considered "national champions" in Belgium due to their size. When spring really gets here in mid March (I say optimistically), the full arboretum re-opens, and you'll soon enjoy the blooming of rhododendrons and cherry trees. It's worth returning in the summer to see the butterfly garden. The arboretum hosts a number of activities, including concerts and picnics, to highlight the flora of every season. ♦



Visiting Kalmthout Arboretum

Besides the hundreds of species of trees and plants at Kalmthout Arboretum, it's equipped with a gift shop, restaurant and loads of activities. During the Hamamelis Festival and Snowdrop Weekend, there are free guided tours in Dutch at 14.00 on Sundays that feature the winter flowering plants. Group tours in English can also be arranged.

In wet weather the grassy paths of the arboretum can be a little muddy, and dogs are only allowed if on a (short) leash.

The arboretum is very convenient to access by public transport. On weekends, trains to Kalmthout from Antwerp and Brussels run every hour. Once you're at the Kalmthout station, it only takes a couple of minutes to walk to the arboretum entrance.

Hamamelis Festival

Until 28 February

Snowdrop Weekend

27-28 February

Kalmthout Arboretum
Heuvel 2, Kalmthout

→ www.arboretumkalmthout.be

AN ACTIVE WEEK

Make a movie

"A festival without workshops is like skiing without lip-balm," according to the organisers of the Flanders Youth Film Festival, and if you have some chapped-lipped young folks hanging around the house this Crocus Vacation, there are still places available for a variety of film festival workshops in Antwerp and Bruges. An introduction to audiovisual media for three to four-year-olds at Cinema Liberty in Bruges utilises the beautiful 1984 film *The Snowman* (pictured); a full-day course for seven- to nine-year-olds culminates in the creation of a DVD in Antwerp's FotoMuseum and the Bruges Conservatory; eight- to 12-year-olds learn special effects and horror make-up in Bruges Conservatory.

→ www.jeugdfilmfestival.be



Make art, then curate it

What better way to create a portrait of your hero or an illustrious family member than by getting up to your elbows in clay or wax? That's the offer for kids from six to 12 in the Strombeek Cultural Centre on 27 February. Children bring along a photo of their subject, which then becomes the model for their sculpture. Then every Saturday in March will be a course on putting together an exhibition, from choosing how to display the work and finding a gallery, to making invitations and arranging a reception (doubtless complete with *pain surprise* and warm white wine). Finally, June seems a way off, but the centre advises early sign up for a three-day workshop on animated films, either with drawings or models, which you'll then be able to take home on DVD.

→ www.ccstrombeek.be

Don't just visit, spend the night

There's too much going on in the city of Ghent, as they'll tell you themselves, to do it all in just one day, which is why until the end of this month you can book an overnight stay in one of the hotels taking part in a city-wide promotion and get the second night for half-price. Two-for-one entry to an exhibition is thrown in, too. Visit the website for a list of hotels and for testimonials from tourists who've been bitten by the Ghent bug, plus a personalised quiz to find out how to get the best out of the city.

→ www.gentteveelvooreennacht.be

Put on your lab coat

De Bedenkers goes from TV to inventive exhibition

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

You would not be able to read this article if it weren't for Johann Carolus, the man who invented the first newspaper in 1605. If you're reading this online, it is thanks to Tim Berners-Lee, who developed the internet in 1990.

All inventions great or small are the result of a creative mind, and 2,000 local inventors sent in ideas to the popular VRT television series *De Bedenkers* (*The Inventors*). The success of the show led to the *De Bedenkers gaan verder* (*The Inventors Take it to Another Level*), an exhibition on inventions and creativity. Having already drawn crowds in Kortrijk and Antwerp, the exhibition has now landed in Hasselt.

To get in the right mood, put on one of the lab coats you'll find at the entrance. They all have the name of a famous inventor on the back; I chose Joel Houghton, the inventor of the dishwasher, to whom I owe eternal gratitude.

The next thing you'll see is a display of three Flemish inventions selected for public prizes by earlier visitors to *De Bedenkers*. "Moodunit" is a colourful plastic stool (*pictured*), which you personally customise by sliding your own image between the layers of plastic. "Paper Buddy" is an aid to binding your old newspapers and cardboard boxes together. The public's favourite, though, is "Mammæ", a nursing bra that is as beautiful as it is functional. (*See bottom right*)

All three products are now available in stores. But how did they get there? How did the inventor go from idea to manufacture? The exhibition has all the answers.

Did you know that 98% of all children between the ages of three and five are creative, yet only 2% aged 25 could be called creative? Or, as Picasso described it: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." This is because the more you learn, the more you accept that every question has only one answer – a creativity killer.

De Bedenkers challenges visitors to use their imaginations through a series of brainstorming exercises ("Brainstorm", by the way, was invented in 1953 by Alex Osborn). To launch a product on the market, you follow certain steps: 1) Define your idea and have a clear purpose; 2) Find out if your idea already exists ([at www.google.com/patents](http://www.google.com/patents)); 3) Make a financial plan and marketing strategy; 4) Launch your idea/product on the market; 5) If you're able to convince people in 30 seconds why they should buy your invention, you passed the test!



Getting from step one to five will probably be an intensive journey of trial and error. It took Thomas Edison 9,000 experiments and 1,093 patents to perfect the light bulb. It will be easier for you: the exhibition's information boards list organisations ready to help you with your ideas. The exhibition advises you to, no matter what, keep on trying. It seems that Ken Olson, president of the Digital Equipment Corporation, wondered in 1977 "why anyone would ever need a personal computer in his house". ♦

De Bedenkers gaan verder

Until 4 April
Kaai 16, Hasselt

<http://debedenkers.een.be>

Food that moves

Flemish chefs unveil inventions that border on sci-fi

COURTNEY DAVIS

Bruges was home last week to The Flemish Primitives, a food event that brought together 17 celebrated chefs and other movers and shakers in the food industry from Flanders and beyond. Science and technology dominated the conversation as five new kitchen inventions made their world premieres.

High pressure

High Pressure Processing (HPP) is a cold pasteurisation technique, subjecting food to a high level of hydrostatic pressure (up to 6,000 atmospheric pressure, the same effect as placing it 60 kilometres deep into the ocean would have if an ocean that deep existed). While industrial sizes of between 55 and 420 litres per batch are already available, this is the first time a machine has been made to allow for five-litre batches. The wide range of benefits includes enhanced flavour and colour and de-scaling crustaceans (an entire uncooked lobster was not mangled by its shell).

Edible gel, without gelatine

The gel is proof of the concept that the structure of fruit and vegetable-based products can be tailored without using additives but by exploiting components that are naturally present. French *pâtissier* Jean-Yves Wilmot developed this firm gel in cooperation with Professor Marc Hendrickx and researchers from the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL).

→ www.theflemishprimitives.com

Moving water

KUL's Professor Jeroen Lammertyn, meanwhile, worked with triple Michelin-star chef Sergio Herman of Oud Sluis in the Netherlands to create a tabletop technique that is part theatrics, part cooking. On a special electronic plate, droplets of liquid actually move around on any pre-designed path. The result is having a coordinated movement of liquid on a plate so as to combine ingredients at the last possible moment for stronger effect – on the eyes, nose and palate.

Emulsion with magnets

It is now possible to get very smooth, paint-like emulsions from food that will last for days. Roger Van Damme, chef at Antwerp's Het Gebaar, saw an opportunity to adapt the emulsion machines used in the cosmetic industry to the food industry. The result is Emulsionfire. By emulsifying liquids using magnets, a rich emulsion forms in five minutes, while it would take longer than a day otherwise.

Freezing with nitrogen

Working with KUL, Flemish chef Kristof Coppens of Apriori in East Flanders was looking for ways to improve the freezing process of food. Freezing damages internal cell structure so that the ingredients are irreversibly changed, with loss of flavour and colour. Now, with the world's first nitrogen freezer for the kitchen, anything from scallops to strawberries to foie gras can be frozen and defrosted without affecting the original structure.

Inventing the perfect bra

Martine Boonen and Eva Boonen are close friends (who happen to have the same last name). They both had their first child about two years ago, a moment that changed their lives as well as their careers. Dissatisfied with the existing range of nursing bras, they came up with an idea: a nursing bra that is beautiful, practical and discreet.

"Our friends were enthusiastic, so we knew our idea had potential," says Martine. "We entered a few creative competitions and always made it to the finals, so we were determined to get our product on the market."

One big obstacle was finding a company to make a prototype. "Many companies were keen on buying our idea and making it their own," Martine says, "but we wanted to keep the invention and start our own company."

Finally, they found a manufacturer in the Netherlands, and Mammæ (Latin for breasts) was born. Launched last October, the collection is available in three colours and 25 sizes.

→ www.mammæ.be



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11

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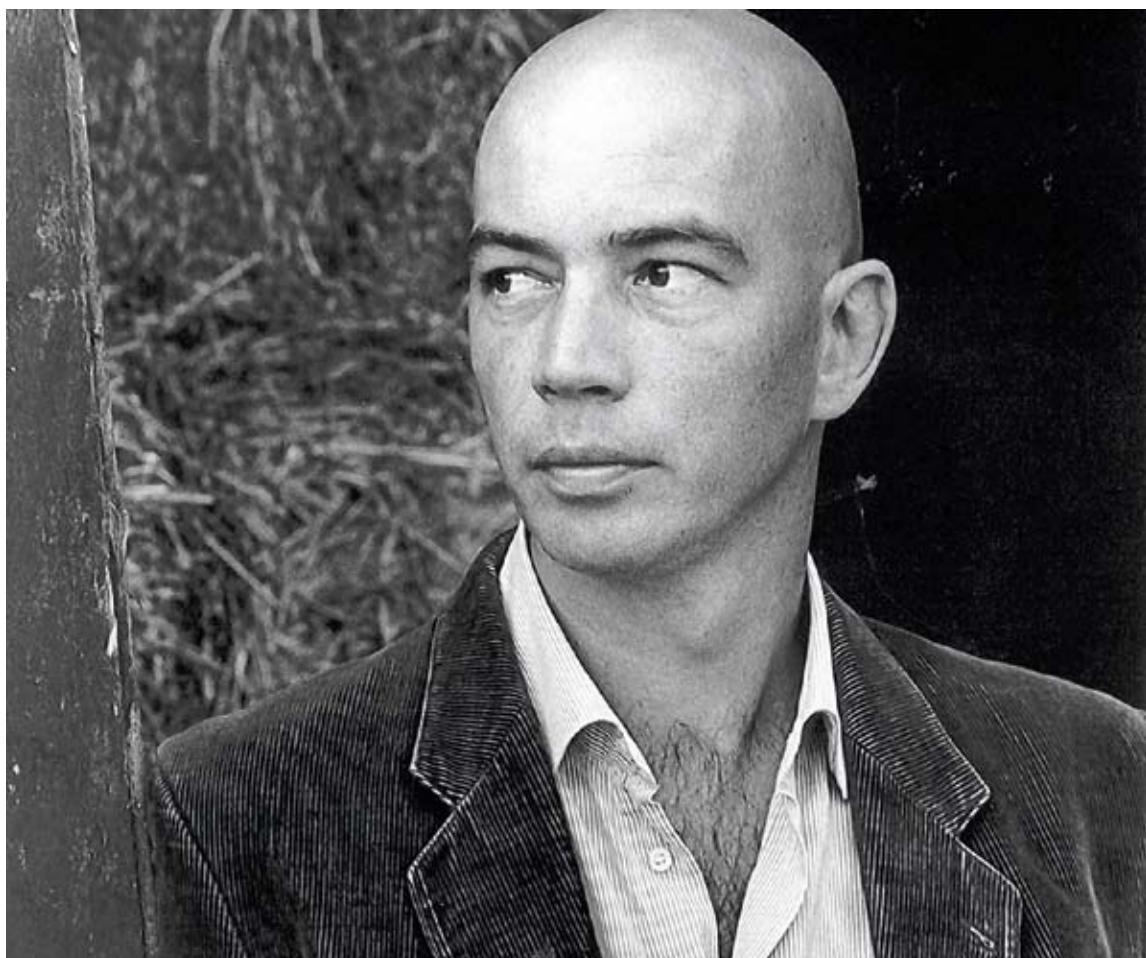
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Chagrin d'Amour

REBECCA BENOOT

Every February for the past decade, audiences have been seduced by Saint Amour – an evening of music and text hosted by literary organisation Behoud de Begeerte (Preserve the Desire) that tackles the subject of love and its never-ending associations.

But this year the Antwerp-based organisation rolls out a new series, Helse Tijden (Hellish Times), which takes on different social topics such as poverty, war, religion and...love. And love, as it so often does, comes first. *Chagrin d'Amour* is made up of a series of meditations on love by musicians, actors and writers.

"I think the combination of people, taste and professionalism that always marks anything that Behoud de Begeerte does is really appealing," says Flemish writer Jeroen Olyslaegers, who takes part in the programme. "It's also great to hang out with colleagues backstage and perform for an audience that is always attentive and warm."

Both poetically painful and fictionally funny, *Chagrin d'Amour* finds writers, musicians and actors elaborating on the heartache, longing, jealousy, pain and para-

noia that goes hand-in-hand with one of the world's most powerful emotions. It's all about, as its title says, the downside of love.

Olyslaegers, the *enfant terrible* of Flemish fiction, will narrate from his novel *Wij* (*We*), in which sex and longing are lingering demons waiting to possess. "It is about people on a holiday during the 1970s," he explains. "They are having fun, but at a certain point everything goes horribly wrong. The excerpt that I will read is about the main character being very drunk, with his marriage nearly collapsing. He suggests a nice after-dinner walk. But he shouldn't have."

The shock effect is also present in Riikka Pulkkinen's debut novel *De Grens* (*The Border*). This Finnish author portrays the lingering road from marital bliss to domestic violence with formidable precision.

Dutch columnist and ex-football player Jan Mulder, meanwhile, adds some humour to this otherwise dark soirée. In Aalst and Turnhout, he will be replaced by Dutch author Tommy Wieringa (*pictured*), who brings us a piece from his latest novel *Caesarion*

about the bond between a mother and child and the ultimate sacrifice.

Despite his ruthless observations of twisted relationships in his bestseller *De helaasheid der dingen* (*The Misfortunates*), Flemish novelist Dimitri Verhulst will show us that he still believes in the power of unconditional love. Together with the Ensor String Quartet, he revives *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross* by Jozef Haydn.

Flemish composer Jan Caeyers guides the audience through the disastrous affairs of Beethoven, while Dutch singer Ellen ten Damme walks the fine line between love and hate.

All in all, *Chagrin d'Amour* is a highly recommended evening of literature, love and simple sweet sorrow. ♦

Until 24 February
Across Flanders

→ www.begeerte.be

MORE LITERATURE THIS WEEK

Peter Holvoet-Hanssen → *Letterenhuis, Antwerp*

Dirk van der Meulen → *Kaaitheater, Brussels*

Paul Bogaert and *de Slalom soft* → *Passa Porta, Brussels*



GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Grace Jones

15 April, 20.00

Lotto Arena, Antwerp

Still rocking and shocking at 61, 1980s icon Grace Jones is back in Belgium after impressing crowds at both Rock Werchter and Ancienne Belgique last year. The woman who did as much for gender-bending fashion as she did for music, made a comeback in 2008 with the album *Hurricane*, with its funky, gospel-like hit single "William's Blood", an autobiographical account of her family's passion for music.



→ www.sportpaleis.be

FEB 19 20.30 Fightstar + InMe
FEB 20 21.15 Delta Fiasco + Dead by Sunrise
FEB 21 21.15 Fear Factory

Vorst-National
Victor Rousseauaan 208; 0900.00.991,
www.forestnational.be
FEB 22 20.00 The Australian Pink Floyd Show
FEB 25 20.00 Tokio Hotel

Dilbeek

CC Westrand
Kamerijklaan; 02.466.20.30,
www.westrand.be
FEB 19 20.30 Raymond Van het Groenewoud & De Straffe Mannen

Eeklo

N9 Villa
Molenstraat 165; 09.377.93.94,
www.n9.be
FEB 20 21.00 The Woodentops

Ghent

Kinky Star
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45,
www.kinkystar.com
FEB 23 21.00 Intergalactic Lovers

Minnemeers

Minnemeers 8; 09.223.22.27,
www.ngent.be
FEB 19 19.30 Postman + Lize Accoe + Rocketsoul
FEB 20 19.30 Lefto #2: Floating Points + Fatima + Shuanise + FunkinEven + more
FEB 21 19.30 The Horrors

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
FEB 21 19.30 Beach House + Lawrence Arabia
Ariaba
FEB 25 19.30 Dez Mona + Blackie & The Oohoos

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44,
www.dekreun.be
FEB 18 20.00 Ilse Liebens
FEB 22 20.00 Maximus + Nouk

Lier

CC De Mol
Aarschotsesteenweg 3; 03.488.06.79,
www.lierscultuurcentrum.be
FEB 24 20.15 Cimmaron



Alsemberg

CC De Meent
Gemeenveldstraat 34; 02.359.16.00,
www.demeent.be
FEB 18 20.15 Ben Sluijs

Antwerp

Buster
Kaastrui 1; 03.232.51.53,
www.busterpodium.be
FEB 18 21.30 Jurassic Jazz **FEB 19** 22.00
Merijn Bruneel Group **FEB 20** 22.00
Keefman **FEB 24** 21.30 Ramsy Irani
FEB 25 21.30 BabL

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33,
www.cafehopper.be
FEB 22 21.30 Royal Roost

De Muze

Melkmarkt 15; 03.226.01.26,
www.demuze-jazz.be
FEB 21 15.00 Merijn Bruneel group

't Kwartier

Keistraat 11; 0475.28.66.10,
www.tkwartier.be
FEB 21 18.00 Dirty Machine plays Tom Waits

Ardooie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82,
www.deschaduw.net
FEB 19 20.30 The Vintage Jazz Cats

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29,
www.dewerf.be
FEB 20 20.30 Big Band Antwerpen and Big Band Lemmenseinstiutut perform Kenny Wheeler and Philip Catherine

Brussels

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
FEB 20 The Archiduks
FEB 21 17.00 Peter Van Huffel Quartet + Lew Tabackin Trio

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be
FEB 20 20.00 Swingajo Trio (Django jazz)

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98,
www.atelier210.be

FEB 22 21.00 Jackson Baird Trio

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
FEB 17 20.30 Pixel
FEB 18 18.00 Root
FEB 20 18.00 Mathilde Renault Trio

Le Montmartre

Boondaalsesteenweg 344;
www.lemnontmartre.be
FEB 21 21.00 Chico & The Mojo

Maison des Arts

Haachtsesteenweg 147; 02.240.34.99,
www.culture1030ecoles.be
FEB 19 20.00 Stilte

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
FEB 18 20.30 Merijn Bruneel Group

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be

Concerts at 22.00:

FEB 17 Groove Thing **FEB 18** Hermia & Tassin Quartet **FEB 19** Qu4tre **FEB 20** Victor Da Costa & Bart Delfort

Quartet **FEB 22** Master Session **FEB 23** Laurent Doumont **FEB 24** Los Soneros del Barrio (Caribbean)

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:

FEB 17 Malte Dürsschnabel 4tet **FEB 18** Jeanfrançois Prins - "Road Movie"

FEB 19 Jeanfrançois Prins - "Colliding Universes" **FEB 20** Jeanfrançois Prins - "All Strings Attached" **FEB 21** Jeanfrançois Prins - "J'Aime session"

FEB 24 Attic Jazz Quartet **FEB 25** Natacha Wuyts Quintet

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13,
www.muziekodroom.be
FEB 20 20.00 Dez Mona

Lokeren

Lokerse Jazzklub
Gasstraat 27; 09.348.32.78,
www.lokersejazzklub.be
FEB 20 21.00 Yvonne Walter sings the Coltrane Ballads



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis

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Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

FEB 18 20.00 De Munt Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hartmut Haenchen, with Tom Randle, tenor;

Dietrich Henschel, baritone: Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde **FEB 21** 11.00

Morgenstern Trio: piano trios by Haydn, Bernstein, Smetana. 15.00 Tembembe Ensamble Continuo - "Baroque

Fandango": blend of Mexican baroque and traditional Latin-American music

FEB 21 20.00 Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur: symphonies by Mozart and Bruckner **FEB 25** 12.30

Leo Wouters and Ward Opsteyn, trumpet; Hubert Biebaut, horn; Jan Smets, trombone; Stefan Van Aenrode, tuba: Rossini, Pietro Mascagni, Corrado Maria Saglietti, more 20.00 Wiener Philharmoniker conducted by Lorin Maazel: Beethoven, Debussy, Ravel

Bruges

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be

FEB 19 20.00 Larisa Quartet, Latin music

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

FEB 20 20.00 Canto del vivo, canto del muerto (Songs of the Living/Songs of the Dead), Mexican music and poetry (in Spanish with Dutch and French surtitles)

Diksmuide

CC Kruispunt

Maria Doolaeghestraat 2b; 05.151.91.56,
www.cckruispunt.be

FEB 19 20.30 Emilia Kirova & Tzigani

Eeklo

CC De Herbakker

Pastoer De Nevestraat 10; 09.218.27.27,
www.ccdeherbakker.be

FEB 25 20.30 Idool 1900, featuring Walter De Buck, Wouter Vandenabeele and more

Ghent

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01,
www.handelsbeurs.be

FEB 24 20.00 Kevin Kinney

FEB 28 20.15 The Grascals



Antwerp

Amuz

Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be

FEB 19-21 inPRIMETIME: Marathon

music festival devoted to Luigi Boccherini and featuring a selection of his 140 string

quintets, with Ensemble Explorations, the Edding Quartet, Quatuor Mosaïques, London Haydn Quartet, more

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be

FEB 25 20.00 Arns Nova Copenhagen, conducted by Paul Hillier: original music

and arrangements by JS Bach

Ghent

De Bijloke

Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2, 09.233.68.78,
www.debijloke.be

FEB 25 20.00 Richard Egarr, harpsichord: Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier (book I)



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be

Until MAR 13 15.00/18.30 Don Carlos by Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Alexander Joel, staged by Peter Konwitschny (in the original French with Dutch surtitles)



Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,

DON'T MISS



The Pre-history 1910 23-26 February Across Flanders

The Vlaams Radio Koor presents an excellent Flemish programme, including three settings by Joseph Ryelandt, the 20th-century Bruges-based composer and director of the conservatory, and Guido Gezelle (*pictured*), priest, Impressionist poet and chaplain to the English Convent in Bruges. The Art Nouveau-inspired programme also includes works by Prosper Van Eechaut and Oscar Roels, as well as more familiar names like Ravel and Debussy. Pianist Inge Spinette accompanies, and the performance will feature the projection of images related to the Art Nouveau/Jugendstil theme.

www.vlaamsradiokoor.be

www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be

FEB 23-24 20.00 Riverdance

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be

FEB 18 20.30 Ziya Azazi presents "Dervish", contemporary interpretation of traditional sufi dance

FEB 19 20.30 I Ketut Rina, choreographed by Pichet Klunchun

Brussels

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be

Until FEB 20 20.0

FEB 24-25 20.30 Compagnie Cecilia in The Broken Circle Breakdown featuring the Cover-Ups of Alabama (music theatre; in Dutch)

HetPaleis
Theaterplein 1; 03.202.83.11,
www.hotpaleis.be
Until MAR 19 Sunjata, de leeuwenkoning van Mali (The Lion King of Mali) (ages six and up; in Dutch)

Brussels
KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be
Until FEB 17 20.00 Bruno Vanden Broecke in Missie (Mission) by David Van Reybrouck (in Dutch with English surtitles)

Scarabaeus Theatre
Hollestraat 19-27; 0475.59.27.03,
www.shaksoc.com
FEB 17-20 20.30 Le Groupe Théâtral des Stagiaires de la Commission Européenne in Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino (in English)

Diksmuide
CC Kruispunt
Maria Doolaeghestraat 2b; 05.151.91.56,
www.cckruispunt.be
FEB 20 20.00 Compagnie Cecilia in The Broken Circle Breakdown featuring the Cover-Ups of Alabama (music theatre; in Dutch)

Dilbeek
CC Westrand
Kamerijklaan; 02.466.20.30,
www.westrand.be
FEB 17 15.00 De Maan and Abattoir Fermé in Nimmermeer, based on short stories by Edgar Allan Poe (ages 8 and up; in Dutch)

Eeklo
CC De Herbakker
Pastoor De Nevestraat 10; 09.218.27.27,
www.ccdeherbakker.be
FEB 18-19 20.30 Je zal alles worden (You'll Become Everything) by Wouter Deprez (in Dutch)
FEB 24 20.30 Comedy café with Dufraing & De Wit, Bruno Bittoun and Frank Tierens (in Dutch)

Ghent
NTGent Schouwburg
Sint-Baafsplein 17; 09.225.01.01,
www.ntgent.be
FEB 23-27 20.30 20.00 Bruno Vanden Broecke in Missie (Mission) by David Van Reybrouck (in Dutch with English surtitles)

Theater Tinnenpot
Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60,
www.tinnenpot.be
FEB 17-24 20.00 Jo Decaluwe in Damiaan (in Dutch)

Mechelen
Stadsschouwburg
Keizerstraat 3; 015.29.40.00
FEB 17 20.15 Je zal alles worden (You'll Become Everything) by Wouter Deprez (in Dutch)



Antwerp
Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60,
www.muhka.be
Until MAY 2 Animism, Part 1, installations, photos and film exploring the collective practices of humans and non-humans and the ensuing relationships

Extra City
Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55,
www.extracity.org
Until MAY 2 Animism, Part Two (see above)

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70,

www.momu.be

Until FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of Belgian Luxury, history of the Belgian leather goods manufacturer

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09,
www.kmska.be
Until FEB 28 Koen van den Broek: Preview, work on paper by the Flemish artist

Sfinks Café

Heuvelstraat 63a, Boechout; 03.455.69.44,
www.sfinks.be

Until MAR 11 Arbeiders onder druk (Workers under pressure), photographs by Tineke D'haese and Eric de Mildt, in cooperation with Oxfam-Solidariteit

Bruges

Bruggemuseum-Gruthuse
Dijver 17; www.uitvindingvanbrugge.be

Until APR 25 De uitvinding van Brugge: De stad van Delacenserie (The Discovery of Bruges: The City of Delacenserie), the 19th-century architectural facelift of Bruges by local architect Louis Delacenserie

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03,
www.argosarts.org

Until MAR 27 Rinko Kawauchi: Transient Wonders, Everyday Bliss, photography, video and slides

Until MAR 27 Ralo Mayer: Travelling Through Biosphere 2, or Anastylosis of Follies, multi-media project

Until MAR 27 James Lee Byars: From Life to Art and Back Again, video

art)&(marges

Hoogstraat 312-314; 02.511.34.20,
www.artthis.org

Until FEB 21 Surprising Dialogues, selection of outsider art from the new museum shown alongside works from fine arts museums in Belgium

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,
www.atomium.be

Until APR 25 Ludic Modernism in Belgium 1955-1963, photographs, posters, models, films and furniture recall the popular architectural style, also known as Spirou or the '58 style

Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50,
www.beursschouwburg.be

Until FEB 26 I Wasn't Born Yesterday, Deary: A Trip in the Eye of Guy Maddin, photographs by Michèle Matyn of the Canadian town of Winnipeg, home to cult film director Guy Maddin

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

Until APR 18 Frida Kahlo y su mundo, works by the famous Mexican artist on loan from the Dolores Olmedo Museum
Until MAY 9 El Greco: Domenikos Theotokopoulos 1900, more than 40 works by the Spanish Renaissance painter
Until APR 11 Mexican Modernisms, overview of post-war Mexican architecture, plus documentary films and contemporary documents

Until APR 11 Mundos Mexicanos, 25 contemporary Mexican photographers

Until APR 25 Imágenes del Mexicano, history of Mexico seen through 150 portraits, including paintings, photos and sculpture

De Loge Architectuur museum

Kluisstraat 86; 02.642.24.62, www.aam.be
FEB 24-JUNE 6 Paris-Brussels: Two centuries of architectural affinities, photographs

De Loketten (Flemish Parliament)

IJzerenkreisstraat 299; 02.552.40.43
Until FEB 27 Henry van de Velde Awards Labels 2009, award-winning designers

Free University of Brussels (ULB)

Grand Hall - Building A, Solbosch Campus
F Rooseveltlaan 50; 02.650.47.35,
www.expopascosoi.be

Until MAY 30 Vanavond niet schat? (Not tonight, honey?), exhibition on the

history of sexuality since the 19th century, from a scientific perspective

Hallepoort Museum

Vautierstraat 29; 02.534.15.18

Until MAR 31 Amour toujours, heart-shaped jewellery, wedding gifts and Valentine cards, among other romantic objects

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Miminenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

Until FEB 21 Arno Stern Retrospective, some 50 works by the French artist known for founding Expression Semiology

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33,

www.legermuseum.be

Until FEB 28 Aanvalleuh!, works by Belgian comic strip artists

Until APR 11 Dieren in de oorlog (Animals in the War), archive photos and films of animals affected by the First World War

Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11,

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until MAR 14 Vier Doornikse wandtapijten uit Pastrana (Four Tournai Tapestries from Pastrana), historically important tapestries originating from the Belgian city of Tournai and restored in Spain (marking the EU Spanish presidency)
Until APR 18 Isabelle de Borchgrave's I Medici: a Renaissance in Paper, life-size paper replicas of historic costumes

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49,

www.tour-taxis.com

Until MAR 28 John Fitzgerald Kennedy: The American Dream, photographs, audio-visual documents and objects relating to the assassinated US president www.jfk-expo.be

Until MAY 2 It's Our Earth! From Kyoto to Copenhagen, interactive exhibition exploring the effects of climate change on the natural world

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50,

www.wiels.org

Until APR 25 Felix Gonzales-Torres: Specific Objects without Specific Form, retrospective of the late Cuban-born American artist

FEB 19-APR 25 Melvin Moti: From Dust to Dust, the contemporary Dutch artist's first solo show in Belgium

Geel

Gasthuismuseum

Gasthuisstraat 1; 014.59.14.43,

www.gasthuismuseumgeel.net

Until MAR 31 God of Doctoor?, collection illustrating the history of healing in Geel

Ghent

Contemporary Art Museum (SMAK) Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be

Until MAR 14 GAGARIN: The Artists in their Own Words, a collection of texts by participating artists

Until MAY 16 Loek Grootjans: Leaving Traces, installations

Until MAY 16 Koen van den Broek: Curbs & Cracks, photographs and paintings by the Flemish artist

Grimbergen

CC Strombeek

Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43,

www.ccstrombeek.be

Until FEB 21 Witte schaduw (White Shadow), drawings by Flemish artist Roger Raveel

Until FEB 21 Paul D'Haese: Dayblind, photographs and installations by the Flemish artist

Until FEB 21 Marie Ange, crafts based on photographs from psychiatric wards

Cultuurcentrum

Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.31, www.ccha.be

Until FEB 21 Witte schaduw (White Shadow), drawings by Flemish artist Roger Raveel

Until FEB 21 Paul D'Haese: Dayblind, photographs and installations by the Flemish artist

Until FEB 21 Marie Ange, crafts based on photographs from psychiatric wards

Leuven

STUK

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20, www.stuk.be

Until MAR 21 Alfredo Jaar: The Sound of Silence, installations by the New York-based Chilean artist

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00,

www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

Until FEB 21 Raveel en Nederland, paintings

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

REBECCA BENOOT



Commedia Oude Markt 55 Leuven

Being a café on Leuven's Oude Markt can't be easy. The infamous square in this student city is quite literally wall-to-wall cafés. How do you go about choosing one? When the competition is this stiff, you have to make a real effort to stand out, and that's exactly what Commedia does.

Despite being tucked away in a corner of the square, this funky hot spot offers an excellent overview of the entire Oude Markt. On the outside, Commedia appears somewhat mundane, easily overlooked for more famous joints like De Komeet or De Metropole. But on the inside, a swanky 1970s interior catapults you back to the good old days when music was funky and bellbottoms were big.

The combination of lounge music, design furniture and deluxe walls with green, orange and brown stripes make you want to put on your dancing shoes and party until dawn. This tiny piece of retro heaven is divided into two floors and has a pit with bombastic green and fuchsia wallpaper, adding a psychedelic touch to the mix. You can either relax in the comfy white leather chairs with a cocktail and some friends, or hang at the bar with its lime green stools. Besides being the fashionistas location of choice for a laid-back coffee after shopping, Commedia can also be hired for private parties and is ideal for those of you who relish a more stylish and singular setting. Pasta and tapas are available if you find yourself feeling a bit peckish after being struck by disco fever.

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FACE OF FLANDERS

Stijn Cambie

It's quite an achievement to be the smartest kid in the smartest class in Flanders, but it's even more remarkable if you yourself taught your classmates all they know. That's how it happens that Stijn Cambie, 15, will be leading his entire class to the second round of the Flemish Maths Olympiad (VWO) next month.

Stijn won the Junior Olympiad last year. Not satisfied with the prospect of his own participation in the real thing this year, he personally trained his seven classmates from the fourth year in industrial sciences at the technical institute VTI Poperinge so they could accompany him. And when it came to the first round last month, they got through – the first time a whole class has ever qualified.

"Sometimes I let him give lessons because the class work for the fourth year is much too easy for him," says his teacher Delphine Naessens.

Last year, the class entered *en masse* and three went through to the second round. Typically, Stijn used maths to address the problem. "After a probability analysis, I knew it would be possible for all eight of us to go through this year," he says. "In the Christmas holidays, I put together a quiz as preparation, and it paid off."

As you read this, Stijn is back at work. "I have another quiz ready for the holidays so that everyone can prepare, but it's not going to be easy," he says. "Of course I hope the whole class can go to the final, but for myself, I'm setting the bar a bit higher. I want to come home this year with the trophy."

Stijn is the son of farmers in West Flanders who spotted his gift early on. "He already knew his tables at the age of four," his mother says. "When he was little, before he went to sleep he



would ask what 600 times 600 was. That comes as a surprise to a parent."

But what is the attraction of maths? "The best thing about maths is that everything makes sense," Stijn said. "Maths is pleasant – much more pleasant than football, for example, though I do that, too, from time to time."

Says Naessens: "It's obviously very special for me as a teacher to have such a talent in the class. But, to be honest, the whole class is special for me."

→ www.vwo.be

ALAN HOPE

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



piepklein →

One of the gems of Flemish television is the programme that follows the evening news on VRT. Its name, *Man bijt hond* – Man bites dog – reflects the fact that it takes an unusual look at ordinary events.

The programme's reporters manage to make the most reserved of people open up in front of the camera. One of the weekly themes is a visit to villages around Flanders, where a local guide points out the places and people of interest.

Recently the *Mbh* team descended on Liedekerke. One of the local characters persuaded to talk to them was a sprightly senior citizen who has a remarkable talent for parking. His garage is between his terraced house and the next. I say garage but, at 1m55 cm wide, it's *piepklein* – tiny. I suggest you pause now and measure that.

He demonstrates to the camera. *Eerst moet ik de fiets buiten zetten* – first I have to take out the bike; *anders kan ik niet binnen* – otherwise I can't get in. He drives a Fiat Panda, which is 1m49cm wide. He first winds down his window, folds in his mirror and attacks the entrance at an angle. Before you know it, he's slid his car into the garage with 3cm to spare either side.

The smart reader may be wondering how he's going to get out of the car. He explains: *nu moet ik deze deur opendoen* – now I have to open this door (in the wall). The camera goes into his living room: the door opens, and there's our man in his car!

But the doorway is too narrow for the car door to open fully: *nu moet ik achteruit rijden* – now I have to reverse; *ik zet de motor af, ik stap uit* – I switch off the engine and get out. He has left the car in neutral with the hand-brake off. *Ik duw de auto naar voren; nu staat de auto op zijn plaats* – I push the car forward (and close the car door); now the car is in its place. He closes the house door and lifts two armchairs back in their place in front of the door. Mission accomplished.

Nearly a million people have seen this parking feat on YouTube, but it's all become a bit much for our driver. *Ik wil dat het ophoudt* – I want it to stop. Camera teams from all over want him to repeat his parking stunt. *Telkens moet ik mijn wagentje zes, zeven keer binnen- en buitenrijden om alles te kunnen filmen* – Each time, I had to drive my car in and out six, seven times so they could film it all.

What he needs is an agent.

→ www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbZvnH0zADA

THE LAST WORD... Lashing out at looks

"It's crazy that you get so worked up about the headscarf. In the Netherlands nobody ever says anything to me about it. It's not a matter of how you look, but how you function as a teacher, surely?"

Ebru Yolcu, a teacher in Antwerp who was criticised by Vlaams Belang member Filip Dewinter as she sat in the public gallery of the Flemish Parliament last week

The last frontier

"We ran up against the frontiers of meteorology." TV weatherman David Dehennauw, responding to critics of the lack of proper warning after five centimetres of snow led to 950 kilometres of road chaos

LearningTunes

"This application will not take the place of learning; it's a complement, a new way of learning."

Spokesman for the Catholic University College of SW Flanders in Kortrijk, which is to make all lectures available on iTunes

Love is in the air
"Just call me a romantic." Flemish singing legend Raymond van het Groenewoud, who celebrated his 60th birthday on Valentine's day

SHARON LIGHT

bite

The Grocery Store

It was the picture of Marmite that caught my eye. The sight of Marmite in a Belgian kitchen is enough to make you look twice – maybe even to pick up the picture and see that it is an ad for The Grocery Store. And before you know it, six boxes of Shreddies cereal, five blocks of cheese, a dozen crumpets and a collection of Cadbury's crème eggs are sitting on your doorstep.

Perhaps I should explain.

The Grocery Store is an online British market, started last autumn by Giles Wareham. Orders placed by 22.00 on a Wednesday are delivered as soon as two days later. Based in Brussels' Elsene municipality, the service specialises in British products that are hard to find in Belgium. Or, even if they can be found, The Grocery Store sells them cheaper.

Sometimes a lot cheaper. The aforementioned Shreddies run to more than €6 a box at my local Carrefour. At the Grocery Store, the same box is less than half that.

Shopping in your pyjamas comes at its own price, of course, in the form of delivery charges for this online service. However, delivery is free on orders over



€100; for that reason, says Wareham, most people order in bulk. "It's not a business to order two packs of biscuits and a pot of jam – it's more like 12 cans of baked beans. People shop once a month to fill up their British larder."

The product selection includes 350 items to date and continues to grow, largely based on what's available and requests from shoppers. The website interface is easy to use, and payment is by credit card or bank transfer.

After submitting your order, a delivery time is arranged. Conditioned by years of Belgian deliveries being scheduled for "between 9.00 and 17.00", I asked how specific I could get. "To the minute!" laughed Wareham.

My delivery didn't arrive at the minute we agreed, but I did get a phone call warning that there were traffic delays and, 40 minutes later, I had my supply in hand.

Delivery is currently available in Brussels, Waterloo, Sint-Genesius-Rode, Overijse and Tervuren. Wareham prizes customer service and is very open to requests, so if you have a special order or see a product missing from his site, get in touch.

→ www.thegrocerystore.be

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com